



Zion Lutheran Monthly



December 2012

Happy Whatever-Doesn't-Offend-You

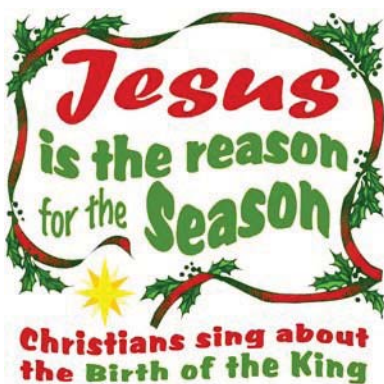
For years, we have been told that there is a “war on Christmas.” For years, we have been told (or tell others) to “keep Christ in Christmas.” And while there is a need to “remember the reason for the season” and decry its misunderstanding (as I am writing this on Thanksgiving Monday, people have already camped out at Best Buy to capitalize on “Black Friday” sales), I want to show you what I think is the silver-lining around the dark clouds of the secularization of America and, in particular, the Christmas holiday.

Lutheranism is the only major branch of Protestant theology that understands the separation of church and state as being part of God’s design for civil society and life in the kingdom. God controls the “kingdom of left” (or the State) by means of the Law; He governs the “kingdom of the right” (or the Church) by means of the Law and the Gospel. The role of the State is to punish wrongdoing and leave the law abiding alone; the role of the Church is to proclaim Gospel of Jesus Christ and be the vehicle through which God saves people eternally. History has shown that neither the State nor the Church functions as designed when one interferes with the affairs of the other. Basically, it’s not wise to give clergy a standing army or a politician a pulpit.

To an unhealthy degree, the Church has allowed elements of civil society inform people about Jesus during the Christmas season. In doing so, the name of Jesus was used, but the true meaning of Christmas was lost, replaced with “peace on earth, goodwill to men” (and so on). There is no atonement, no forgiveness, no resurrection in civil society’s talk of “Christmas.”

Now, with civil society taking a more secular approach, she does not feel the need to speak about Christmas. Instead, she prefers any number of amorphous congenial seasonally appropriate greetings. Civil society (the kingdom of the left), in abandoning speaking the name of Jesus, has given back to the Church (the kingdom of the right) what was her divine mandate all along: to speak the name of Jesus and proclaim the gospel in truth and purity.

There are many things that are problematic with our culture becoming increasingly secularized. Life is not valued as a God-given and miraculous gift; the acquisition of material possessions is prized as man’s chief end; trust in the governing authorities is esteemed greater than trust in God; and charity is replaced with welfare. However, there is at least one silver-lining: the Church is now the only voice speaking the name of Jesus to a world that needs to hear the good news. Not having to compete with other voices, we can clearly be heard as we proclaim that, in Christ, we all have forgiveness, life and salvation!



A very blessed Christmas to all!
Pastor Duncan McLellan

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Join Us at Advent Worship



Advent Services:
Wednesday, December 5, 12, 19
Dinner @ 6:00 pm
Service @ 7:00 pm

Christmas Program:
Sunday, December 16
Dinner @ 5:30 pm
Program @ 7:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service:
Monday, December 24
Service @ 7:00 pm

Christmas Day Service:
Tuesday, December 25
Service @ 10:00 am

New Year’s Eve Service:
Monday, December 31
Service @ 7:00 pm

Church, Mission & Synod (CMS) & Plate Finances



October Income	\$ 35,996.00
October Expenses	<u>35,084.00</u>
Favorable to Income	\$ 912.00

As of the end of November 2012, we are estimating \$11,727.00 cash on hand. All bills through November have been paid.



This year's Thanksgiving offering will be used to support the Bridgeville Food Bank and Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in New York who are dealing with the impact of super storm Sandy. Continue to pray for Zion that we are able to grow our community outreach ministry, support local charities and Christian education for youth and adults. May God guide us in using these gifts and our talents to spread the Good News!

May the Joy and Peace of Christmas be with you and your family now and through the New Year.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Bob Schmidt
Chairman

FOOD BANK UPDATE FOR 2013



It is a great joy to have such an outpouring of generosity from the members of Zion congregation for the area children of families in need. On behalf of the Bridgeville Area Food Bank (BAFB) thank you to everyone who is participating in the Christmas Angel Tree project. Please return your unwrapped gift costing around twenty dollars with the gift tag attached by **Sunday, DECEMBER 9**. May those who give and those who receive be blessed with knowing that Jesus is the best gift of all.

Thank you to everyone who has participated in giving food throughout this past year. It has helped many families within our community.

If you wish to help out we accept all non-perishable items each month. You may place these items in the church narthex. In addition an "item of the month" will be suggested as we combine efforts with other area churches to collect what the BAFB calls extras. These items normally are not purchased on a regular basis by the BAFB but are much needed supplies for individuals and families.

The following is a list of the upcoming, "item of the month":

January 13- Packaged meals
(Hamburger helper, Rice-a-Roni, etc.)
February 10- Cereal and breakfast food
March 10- Fruit (canned and dried)
April 14- Rice, noodles, and beans
May 12- Picnic condiments
June 9- Paper products

July 14- Fruit juices and drinks
August 11- Crackers
September 15- Personal hygiene products
October 13- Baking supplies
November 10- Canned meats and proteins
(tuna, salmon, nuts, etc.)
December 15- Hot drinks

Notes From the Preschool

Greetings from the Preschool! We hope everyone had a blessed Thanksgiving. We have been busy little Pilgrims and Indians. As we usually do in November, we asked the children to bring in food items for the Bridgeville food bank. We explained that the food bank is where people who don't have enough money to buy food can go and get food. Wow....the children were certainly up to the challenge. We were able to send bags and bags of food to help those less fortunate. It made the children feel good to know that they were helping little children and their families. Children truly are amazing in their capacity to understand real topics when presented in a way that relates to them.

The Spaghetti Dinner and Art Show was a huge success. We served over 300 people...very

generous people I might add. Between ticket sales and the Bake Sale, I believe we set a school record for monies earned. Thank you to all who helped make this event possible. We could not do it without you. All of the money raised will help fund our new playground. And on that note.....the playground equipment has been delivered and hopefully will be installed in the next month, or so, weather permitting. We are so excited to be able to provide this new area to our dedicated school families who helped make this possible. I can already hear the children's laughter as they hit the playground for the first time!

Our Christmas program will be on two days this year due to the number of students and their families who attend. We would



love for you to come and enjoy a night of beautiful Christmas music sung by our preschool children. What a joy it is to hear the good news of Christ's birth through the voices of these little children. The program dates are Monday December 10th and Thursday December 13th. Hope to see you there.

Blessings,
Tracey Harris
Director

Stephen Ministry Commissioning

On December 16th at the 10:30 service, eight members of Zion Lutheran Church will be commissioned as Stephen Ministers. These eight individuals have each completed fifty hours of training, as well as many hours of reading and study outside of the classroom training. Trained in the art and skill of Christ-centered care-giving, Stephen Ministers help meet the spiritual needs of people going through hard times.

We look forward to linking our Stephen Ministers up with people who could benefit from a listening, Christian ear, an empathetic soul, and a dedicated and skilled care-giver!

Want to learn more about Stephen Ministry? Contact Pastor Duncan or the church office.



Thank you...

Dear Members of Zion:

Thank you for sending another collection of Box Tops to Redeemer Lutheran School. I really appreciate your continued efforts to support this school ministry. The Box Tops program continues to be a growing blessing for our scholarship program. Thank you for helping us meet those needs!

In Christ,
Gail Holzer
Principal, Redeemer Lutheran School



Cookies, Brownies, and Treats—Oh My!

The Sunday school is requesting finger-style dessert donations for our Christmas program celebration. We are asking all Sunday school parents to volunteer, but everyone is welcome to donate their favorite dessert items. Please label your dessert donations, "Christmas Program", and bring to the kitchen any time on Sunday, December 16th.

A request from Zion's Sunday School Teachers:

We are asking that Sunday school families donate paper products (toilet paper, tissues, paper towels, etc.) for the Bridgeville Area Food Bank instead of giving teacher gifts. Paper products are GREATLY appreciated at the food bank!



Look for collection boxes labeled "Sunday School Paper Product Donations" during the month of December!

COMING SOON—ASSESSMENT SURVEY

The Long-term Planning Committee will be conducting a short assessment survey on the first three Sundays in December. The data will be used to help us focus on the congregation's key focus areas and the future ministry needs. This information will guide us in developing a long-term direction for Zion. Our goal is to analyze the data and present the findings to the voters at the January 13, 2013 Voters meeting.

On behalf of the planning committee, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation, in advance for participating in the survey.

Bob Schmidt
Chairman



Service Participants

December

Greeters & Acolytes			
DATE	TIME	GREETERS	ACOLYTES
December 2	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	John & Katie Gielarowski & family Frank & Dione Vallelunga & family	Joshua Gielarowski Ryan Harris
December 5 Advent	7:00 PM		Elder
December 9	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Gene & Sharon Koop Sam Dragan	Missy Radovich Jennifer Fitzgerald
December 12 Advent	7:00 PM		Elder
December 16	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Larry & Janet Zreliak Janet & Marian Oelschlager	Grant Geregach Sydney Harris
December 19 Advent	7:00 PM		Elder
December 23	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Carl & Karen Bauer Ben & Megan Meyer	Anthony Vallelunga Josiah Ackerman
December 24 Christmas Eve	7:00 PM	Sam Dragan	Mitchell Fitzgerald, Jennifer Fitzgerald Crucifer: Joe Gielarowski
December 25 Christmas Day	10:00 AM	John & Katie Gielarowski & family	TBA
December 30	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	George, Jane, & Chester Kozak Michael & Deborah Sterba	Grant Geregach Ryan Harris
December 31 New Year's Eve	7:00 PM	Dick & Carolyn Wible	Joshua Gielarowski
January 6	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Brent & Marianne Miller, Millie Thielet Jim & Marylou Neill	Anthony Vallelunga Mitchell Fitzgerald
January 13	8:00 AM 10:30 AM	Clara Hayes Dan & Tracey Harris & family	Missy Radovich Sydney Harris

ELDERS	Frank Vallelunga, Ken Wuerthele
ALTAR GUILD	Janet Oelschlager, Marian Oelschlager
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Bill Becker, Brent Miller, Barb & Wayne Oechslein
USHERS @ 10:30 am	Steve Gauer, Dan Harris, Loren Luedeman, Jim Oelschalger

January

ELDERS	TBD
ALTAR GUILD	Elsie DallaPiazza Mary Hutula
USHERS @ 8:00 am	Bill Becker, Brent Miller, Barb & Wayne Oechslein
USHERS @ 10:30 am	Neil Ackerman, Sam Dragan, Richard Quinlan, Lois Sauro

If you are unable to participate on the assigned date, please find your own substitute and notify the church office (412) 221-4776 or secretary@zxcb.org of the change.



1 Laurie Eckels	7 William Kammerer	24 Jeremy Dyczewski
2 John Coyle	10 Mike Kozak	24 Michael Dyczewski
2 Abigale Morgan	12 Paul Green	27 Kay Lynn Case
2 Sharon Oechslein	12 Michael Oechslein	27 Rebekah Quinlan
3 William (Augie) Bishop	13 Susan Stone	28 Allyson Morgan
3 Linda Seibel	17 John Gresh	29 Kathleen Derosa
5 Benjamin Ackerman	18 Bob Spotti	29 Leah Luedeman
5 Steve Dibert	23 Adam Elikor	29 Riese Smidt
5 Dick Wible	23 Megan Pasquini	30 Jordan James

Zion Lutheran Church

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Bridgeville, PA 15017
Phone: 412-221-4776



Visit **ZLCB.ORG**

For updated information throughout the month.

The Rev. Duncan McLellan

CSI: Bethlehem



"Hi! I'm Sally Wannaknow from Z-I-O-N News inviting you to watch a special news report to be aired in December. CSI: Bethlehem tells a story about three Magi who are on a quest to find a king - someone who will save all mankind. What they find is a Savior who will free them from the grips of sin and who will offer full and free salvation for all who believe! Our reporters are working hard to bring us this story which will "broadcast" live on Sunday, December 16th in the church sanctuary following the Christmas dinner. Don't miss this exciting news report!!"



You are cordially invited to join the Sunday school children in celebrating together the birth of our Savior, Jesus!

"And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9: 6



ANNOUNCEMENTS



FOOD BANK

Collection for this month's Bridgeville Area Food Bank is **Sunday December 9**. The "item of the month" is hot drinks. You are also welcome to help at the Food Bank every third Saturday of the month between 7:45 and 12:00 at Bethany Presbyterian Church.

SOFTBALL

We've had a terrific initial response for a Zion Softball Team! Here's what we can tell you...

We will be joining the Chartiers Valley Church Softball League. The cost for the season will be covered by the budget, but we will ask our team's members to voluntarily contribute to cover costs as they are able.

The league is recreational (as opposed to professional or extraordinarily competitive), co-ed, slow-pitch and open to all members of Zion Lutheran Church. (They have special rules for letting non-members play. Basically, one year on the team for non-members to avoid our bringing in the proverbial "ringers" year after year.) The season runs from April through August, with one game per week. If you are interested in learning more, or signing-up for the team, please contact the church office or sign up in the lobby!



Beginning Sunday November 25th, you were able to order poinsettias to remember the special people in your life and to decorate our altar area during Christmas. The poinsettias are \$6.50 each and are available in red, white, and pink. Orders will be accepted until Sunday December 16th. However, please note that the later

the orders are received, there is a lesser guarantee that the florist will have your desired color available.

POINSETTIA

ORDERS